

STARBLAZER

SPACE FICTION ADVENTURE IN PICTURES No. 123

20p

HE DISOBEYED AN ORDER
AND SO SAVED THE TERRAN
WORLDS FROM ...

THE PLANET EATER



STARBLAZER



THEY CALLED IT THE VORTEX. A SPINNING MASS OF ENERGY WHICH TRAVELLED, APPARENTLY HARMLESSLY, THOUGH THE SOLAR SYSTEM. LIKE A DORMANT VOLCANO IT CAUSED NO HARM UNTIL IT ERUPTED FOR SOME UNKNOWN REASON. TERROR GRIPPED THE UNIVERSE—IT WAS A DESTROYER OF WORLDS—A PLANET EATER.

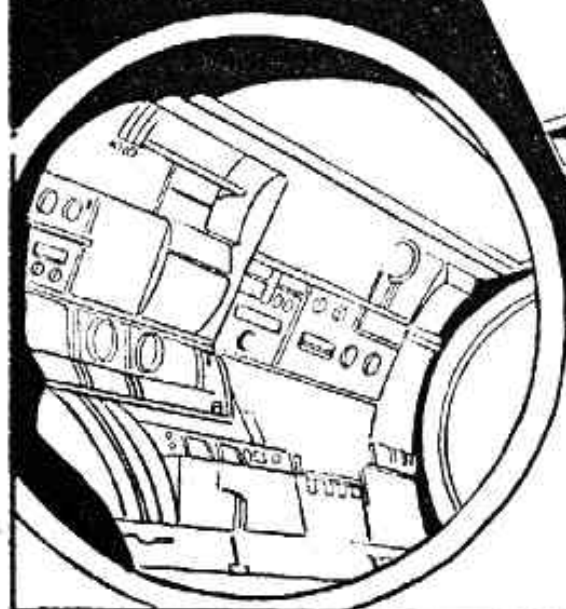
The PLANET EATER

THE VORTEX RIPPED AN ASTEROID IN THE ANDROMEDA GALAXY TO PIECES.



A MANNED TERRAN SPACE LABORATORY WAS IN ORBIT ROUND THE VORTEX AT A SAFE DISTANCE.

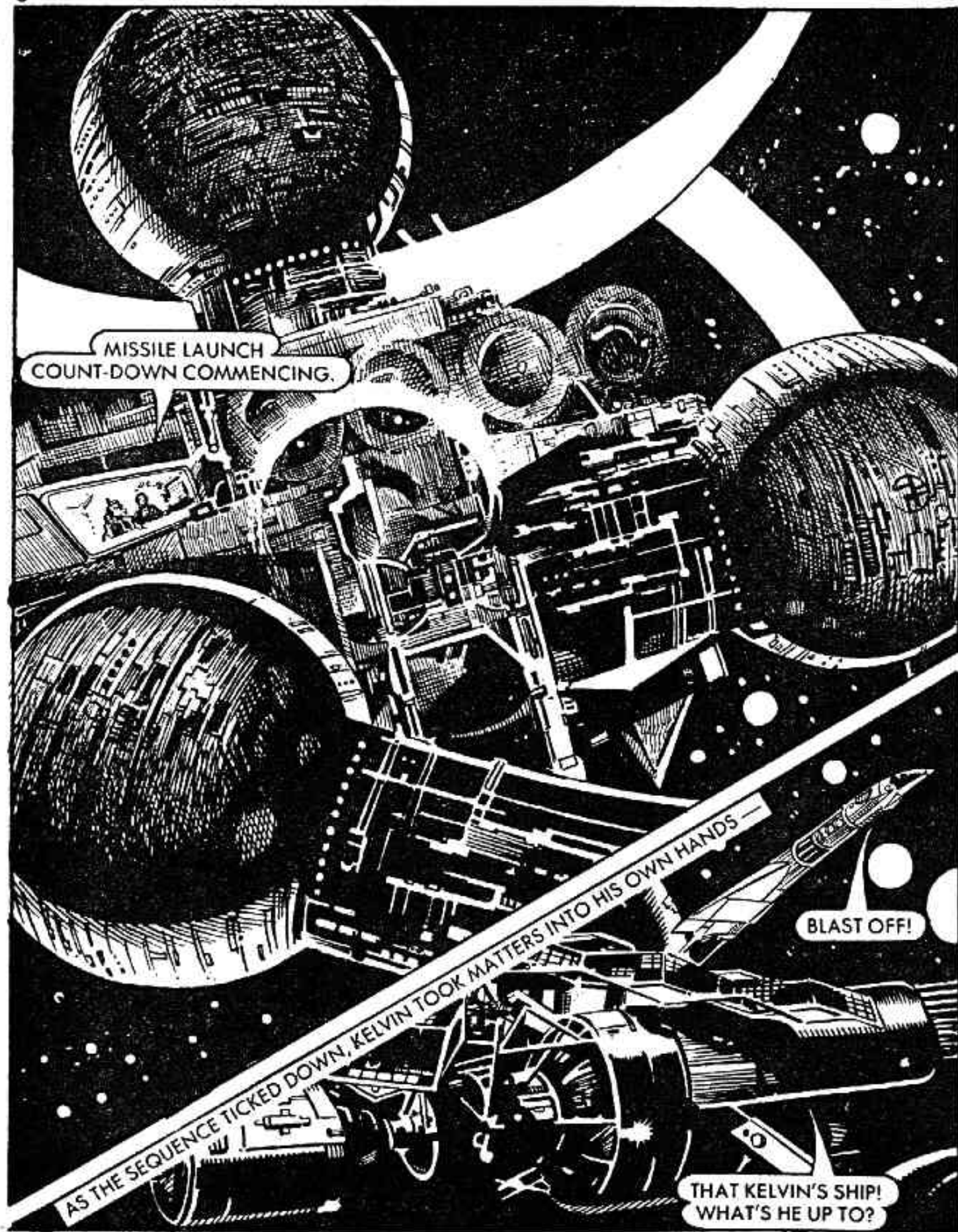
THE POWER OF THAT THING IS UNBELIEVABLE.



ACCORDING TO MY CALCULATIONS, THE VORTEX IS ON COURSE FOR EARTH!







PR 1

KELVIN PREPARED TO ENTER THE VORTEX.

THE VORTEX TEARS PLANETS APART, BUT IF I USE THE DEFLECTOR SHIELDS, THE FORCES WILL BE LESSENER.

LIEUTENANT KELVIN...
RETURN IMMEDIATELY!

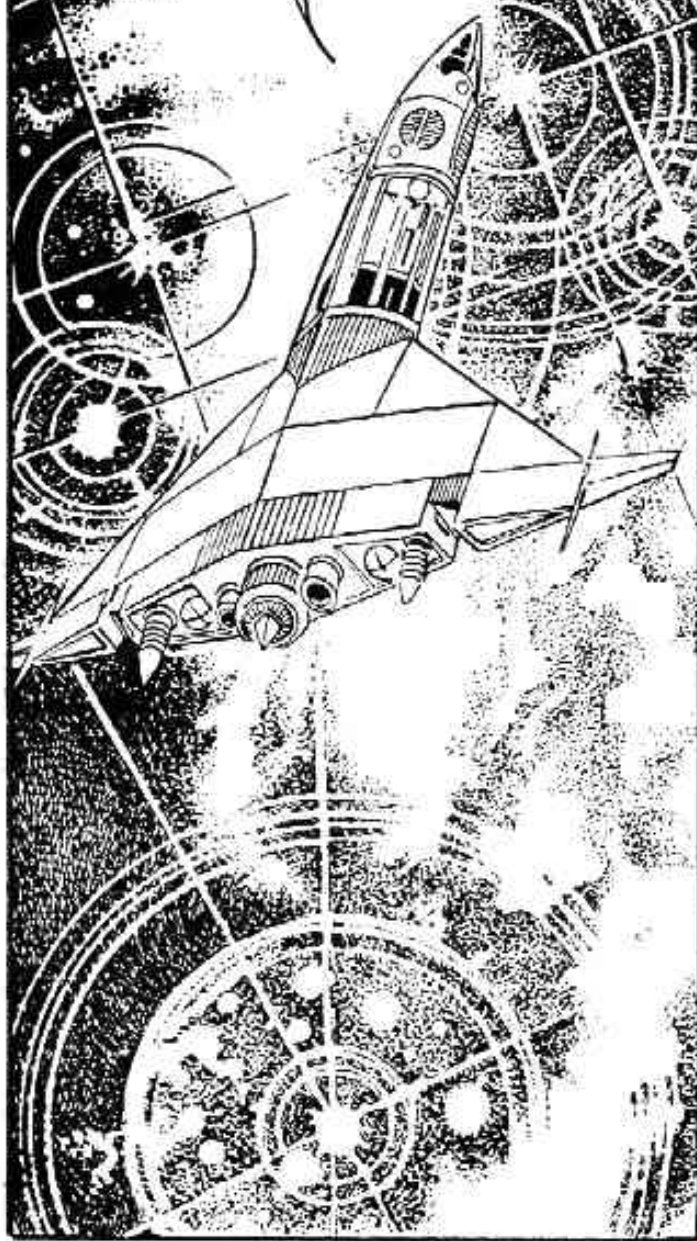
BUT KELVIN SHUT OFF COMMLINK AND SET HIS COURSE.

HE'S MAD!

MAYBE SO, BUT WE HAVE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THAT VORTEX. WE CAN GUIDE THE MISSILE INTO POSITION, AND DETONATE IT LATER.

WITHIN THE VORTEX, KELVIN FELT AWESOME FORCES WORKING ON THE DEFLECTOR SHIELDS.

THE TURBULENCE IS ALMOST TEARING THE SHIP APART!

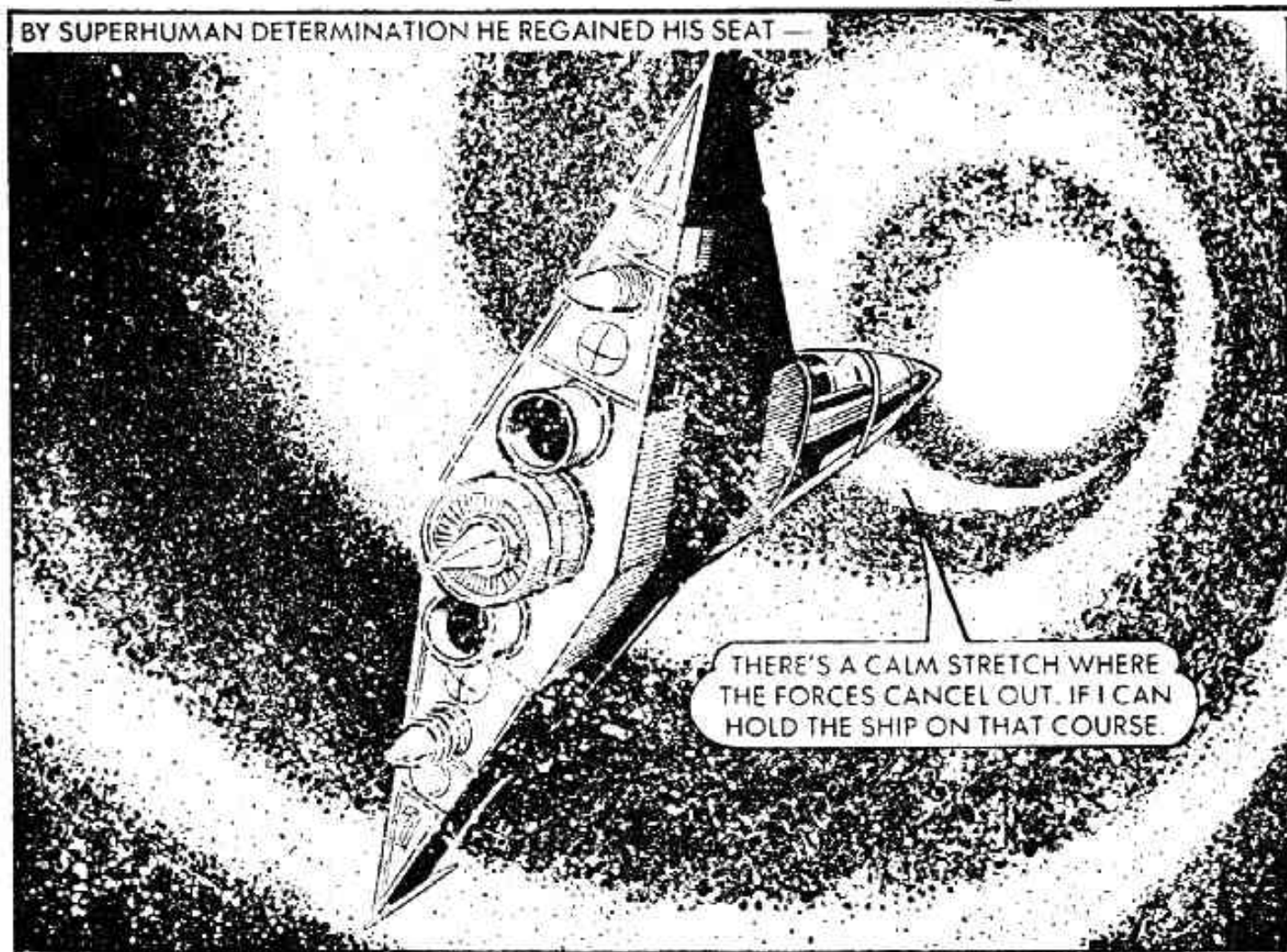


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TURBULENCE RIPPED KELVIN FROM THE CONTROLS.



BY SUPERHUMAN DETERMINATION HE REGAINED HIS SEAT —

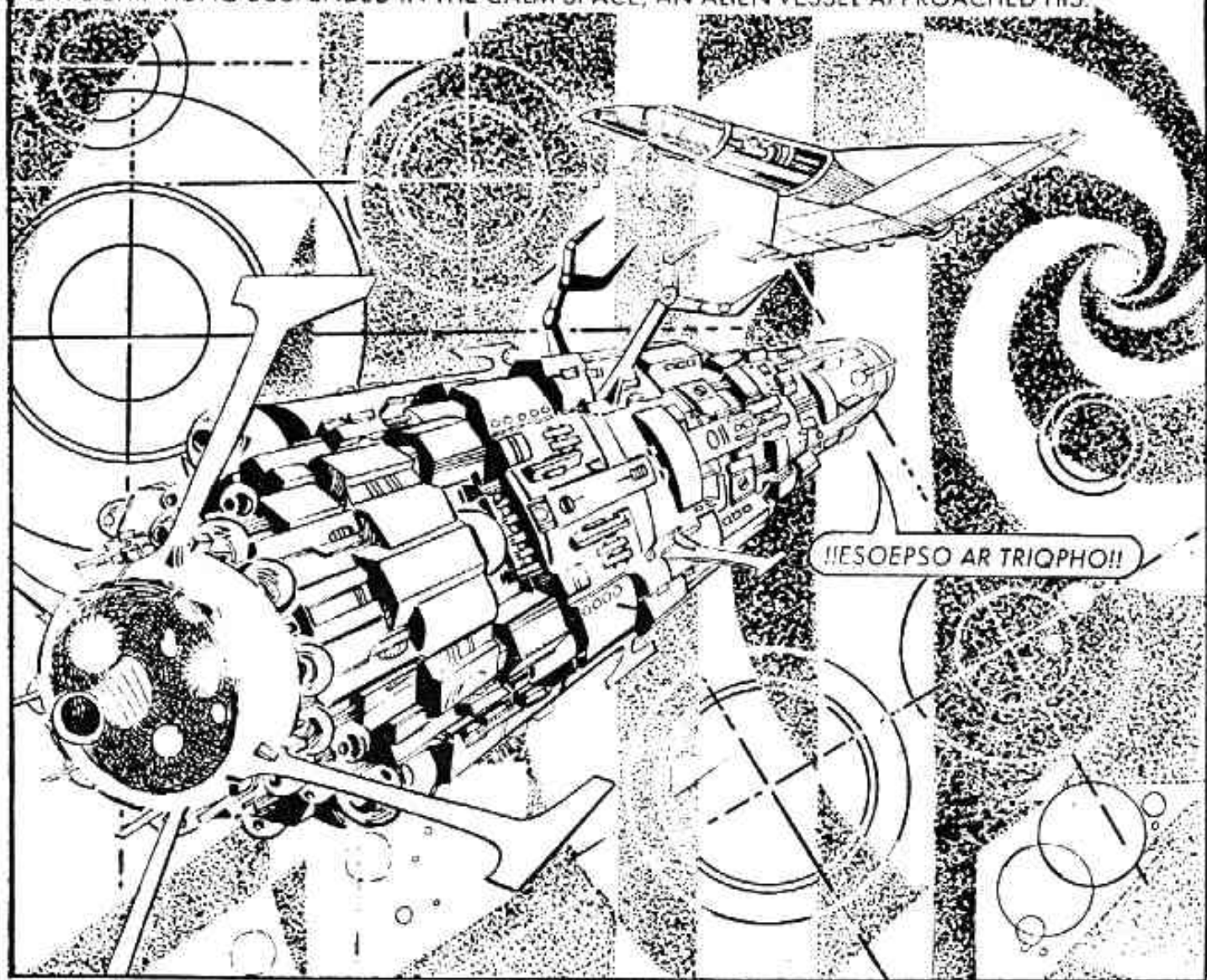
THERE'S A CALM STRETCH WHERE
THE FORCES CANCEL OUT. IF I CAN
HOLD THE SHIP ON THAT COURSE.



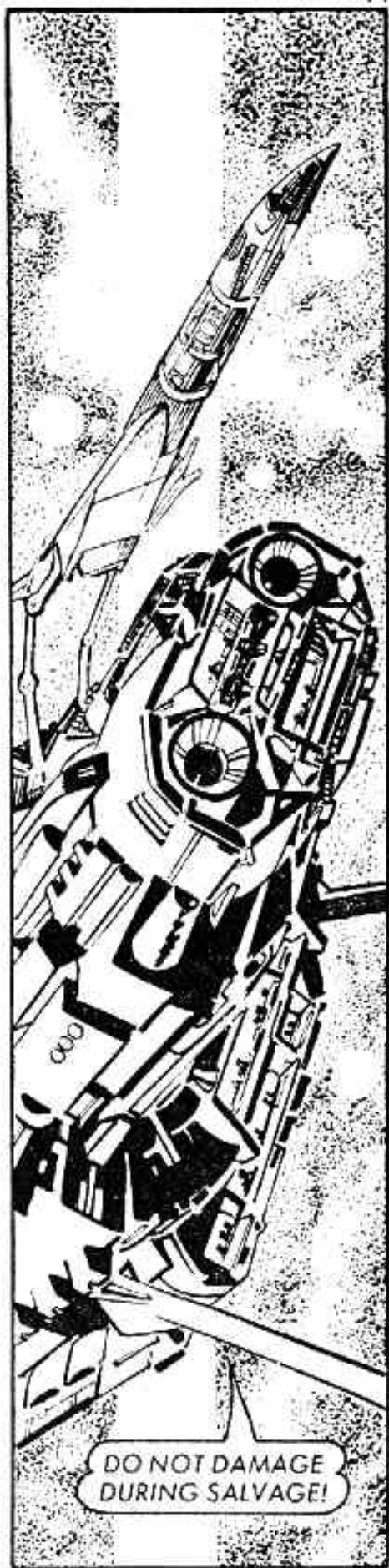
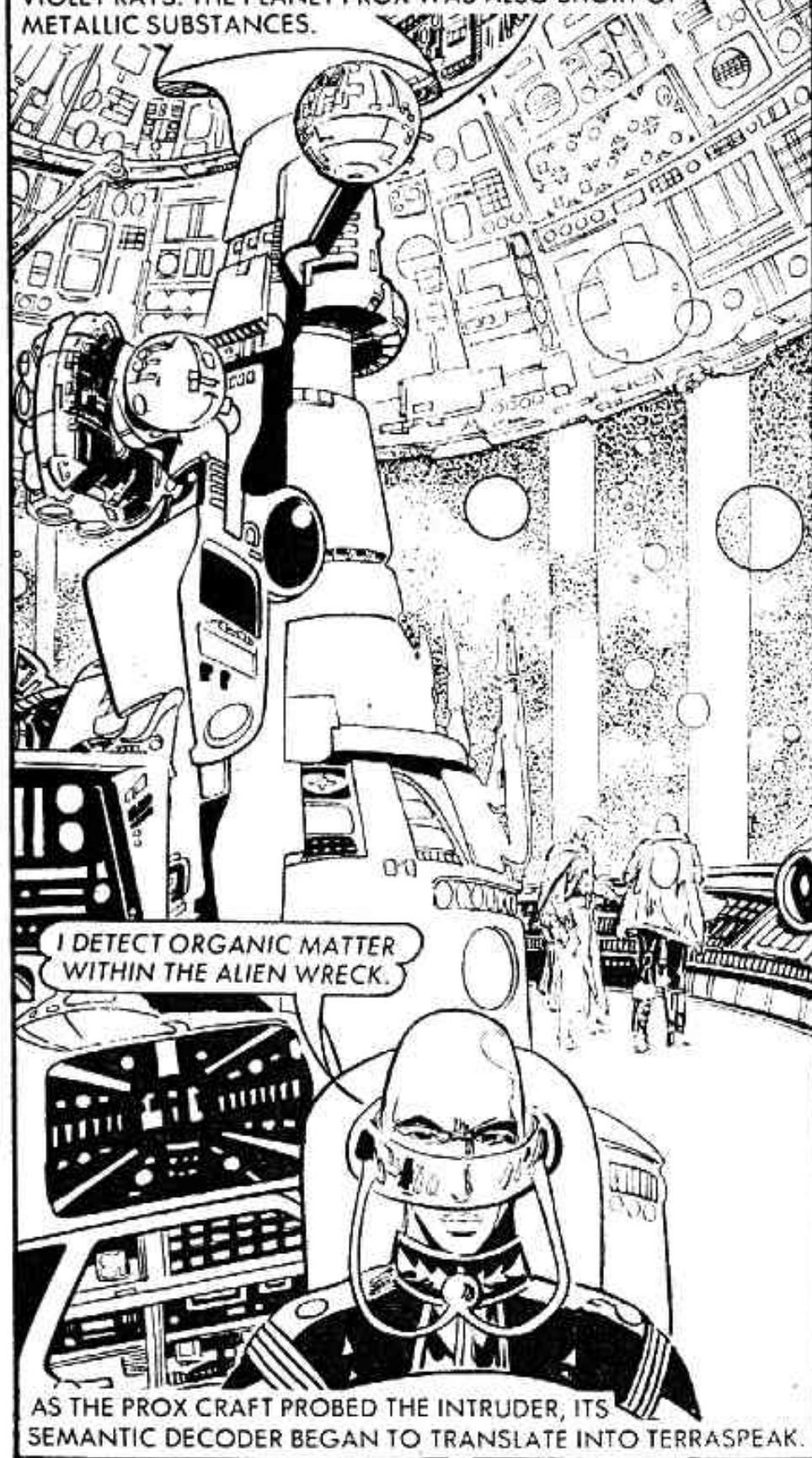
KELVIN BLACKED OUT, BUT EMERGED INTO THE CALM OF AN ALTERNATIVE UNIVERSE.



AS HIS SHIP HUNG SUSPENDED IN THE CALM SPACE, AN ALIEN VESSEL APPROACHED HIS.



THE INHABITANTS OF THE ALTERNATIVE UNIVERSE WERE THE PEOPLE OF PROX, A PLANET NOT UNLIKE EARTH. THE PEOPLE HAD EVOLVED DIFFERENTLY BECAUSE OF THE LACK OF ULTRA VIOLET RAYS. THE PLANET PROX WAS ALSO SHORT OF METALLIC SUBSTANCES.



THE CAPTIVE SHIP FROM BEYOND THE VORTEX WAS TOWED TOWARDS THE STRANGE CONICAL PLANET OF PROX.

THIS ORGANIC MATTER IS A LIFE FORM.
IT MUST BE CAREFULLY ANALYSED.

THE PROX SPACEPORT WAS ALERTED —



KELVIN WAS STILL UNCONSCIOUS, WHEN HE WAS REMOVED FOR EXAMINATION —

HURRY! IT MUST BE RIGOROUSLY
EXAMINED WHILE IT STILL LIVES.

KELVIN'S METABOLISM WAS ANALYSED IN SECONDS.

CREATURE IS SIMILAR TO US, BUT
MENTALLY INFERIOR. DETAILS AS
FOLLOWS...

KELVIN EVENTUALLY CAME
ROUND —

WHERE AM I? WHERE DID THESE
WIERD CLOTHES COME FROM?

YOU ARE ON THE PLANET OF PROX
AND MUST MEET OUR ELDER.

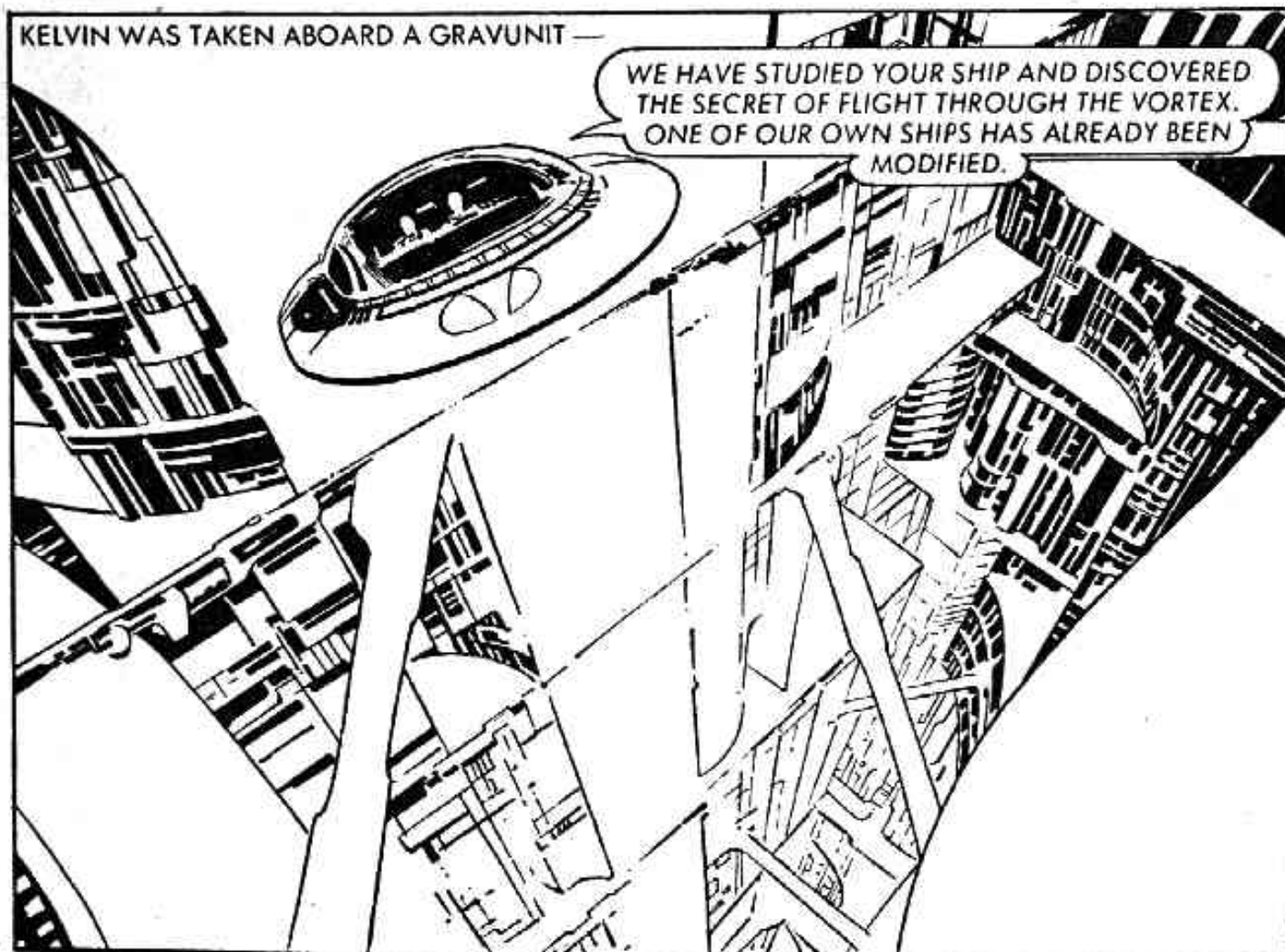
KELVIN TOLD HIS ENTIRE STORY TO THE ELDER —

... SO YOU'VE GOT TO DO
SOMETHING ABOUT A MISSILE.

WE ARE PREPARED.



KELVIN WAS TAKEN ABOARD A GRAVUNIT —



ALREADY WE ARE ON OUR WAY. OUR FIRST
FLIGHT BEYOND THE LIMITS OF OUR OWN
UNIVERSE.



WE HAVE KNOWN ABOUT THE EXISTENCE OF A
UNIVERSE BEYOND THE VORTEX FOR A THOUSAND
SPACIALS, BUT NEVER KNOWN HOW TO REACH
IT BECAUSE OF OUR LACK OF METAL.



YOUR PEOPLE WILL BE SURPRISED
TO SEE OUR SPACE-SHIP.

I COULD HAVE TAKEN YOU BACK
TO EARTH. WHY DIDN'T YOU LET
ME?

THE PROX KEPT CONTACT WITH THEIR SHIP AS IT BRAVED THE VORTEX.

WE CAN FIND OUR WAY
WITHOUT YOUR HELP.

THEY DON'T WANT ME TO GO BACK!
FOR SOME REASON THEY WANT ME
HERE. I'M A PRISONER.

MEANWHILE, AT THE SPACE LABORATORY THE MISSILE ATTACK CONTINUED.

MISSILE IN FINAL STAGE. ON TARGET
AND CLOSING.



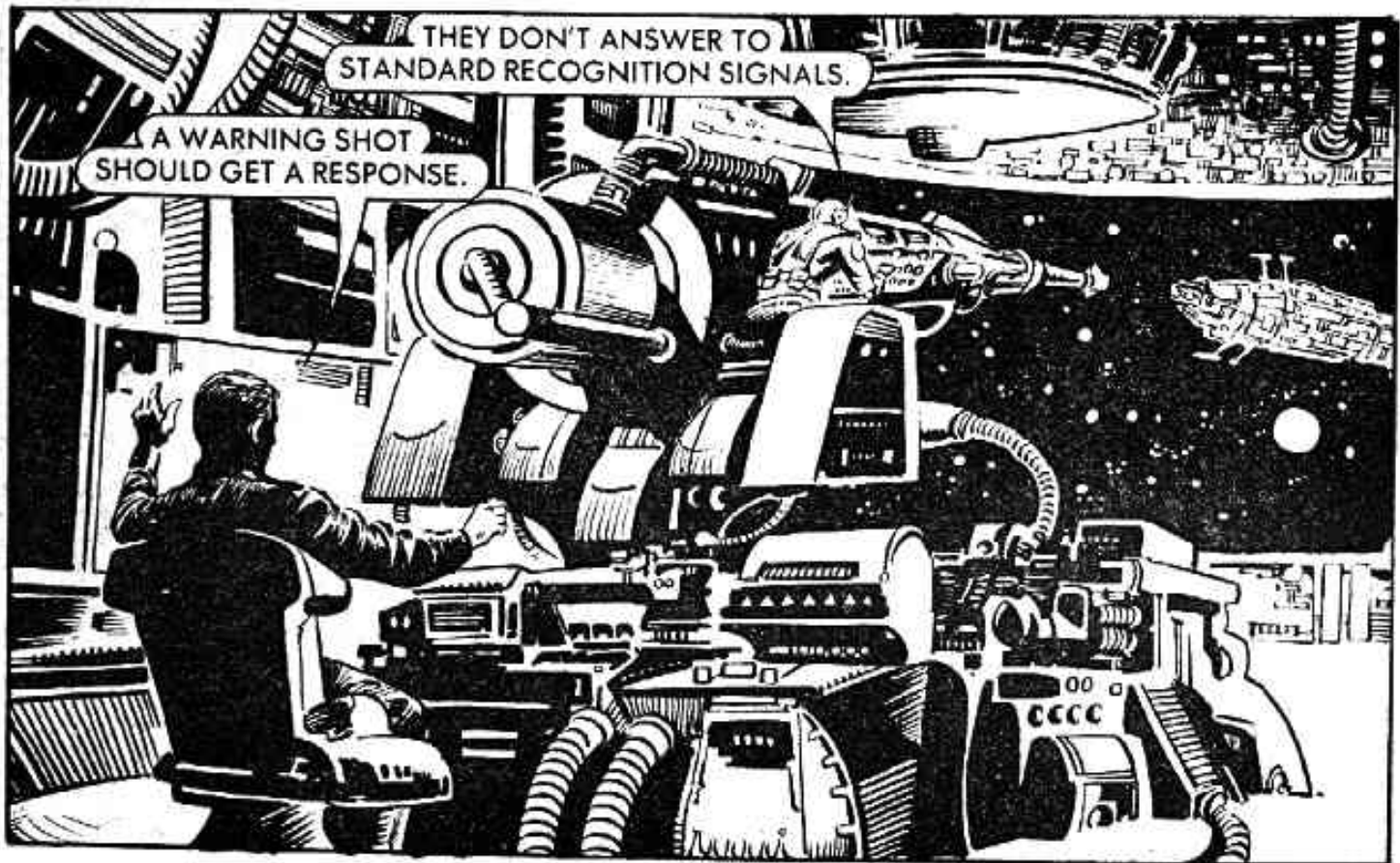
THE CAPTAIN SOUNDED ACTION STATIONS.

RED ALERT! THAT MIGHT BE THE
VANGUARD OF AN ALIEN FLEET.



THEY DON'T ANSWER TO
STANDARD RECOGNITION SIGNALS.

A WARNING SHOT
SHOULD GET A RESPONSE.

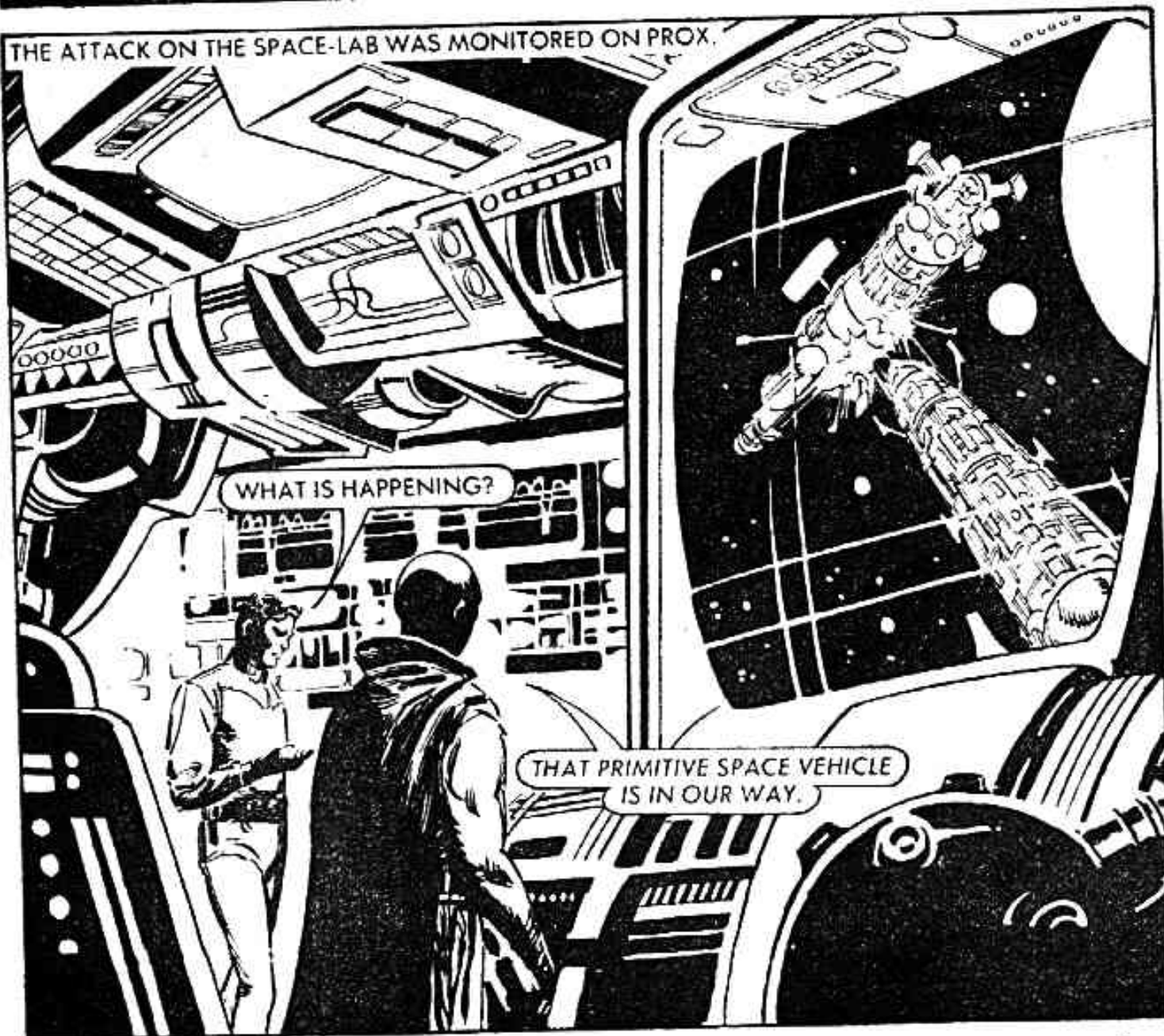


BUT AS THE FIRST BURST WAS FIRED



THE CANNON HAS
BECOME WHITE HOT!

THE ATTACK ON THE SPACE-LAB WAS MONITORED ON PROX.



WHAT IS HAPPENING?

THAT PRIMITIVE SPACE VEHICLE
IS IN OUR WAY.



THERE IS A METAL RICH PLANET ON THIS SIDE! THE VORTEX COULD SWALLOW IT EASILY.

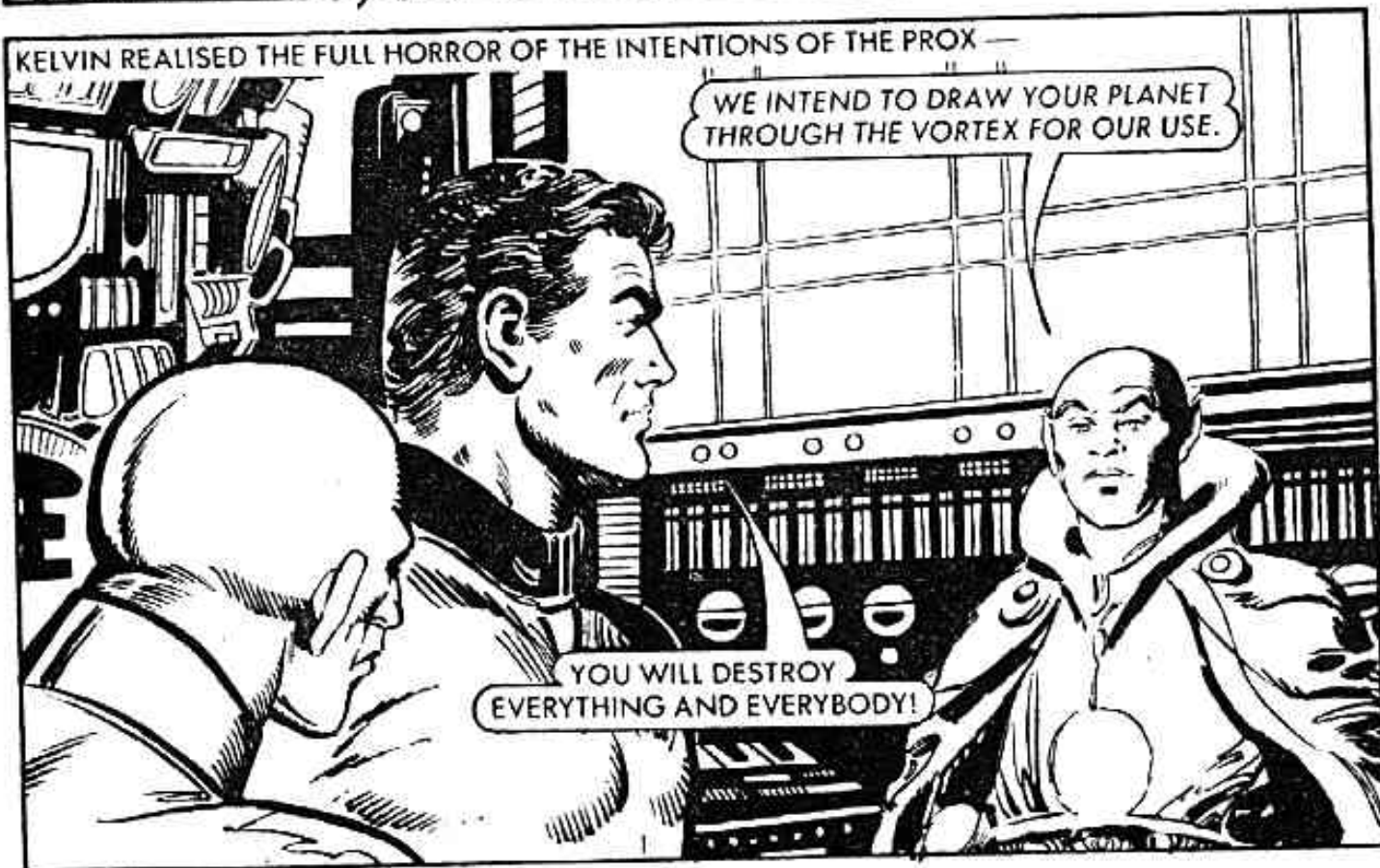
PROCEED! ALTER CO-ORDINATES OF VORTEX.



KELVIN REALISED THE FULL HORROR OF THE INTENTIONS OF THE PROX —

WE INTEND TO DRAW YOUR PLANET THROUGH THE VORTEX FOR OUR USE.

YOU WILL DESTROY EVERYTHING AND EVERYBODY!

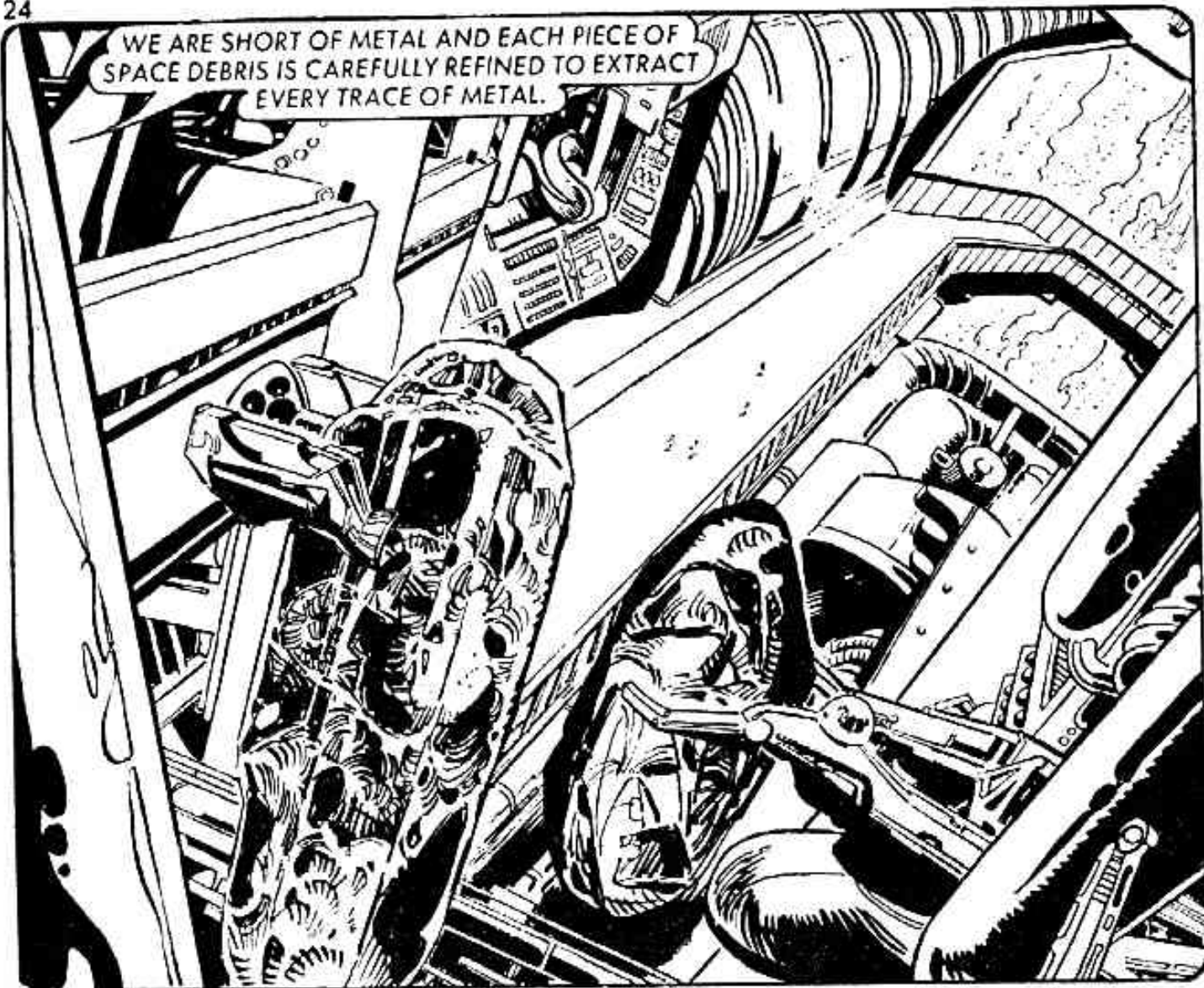


OURS IS A UNIVERSE OF ENERGY WHERE RAW MATERIAL IS SCARCE. OUR TECHNOLOGY IS BASED ON WHAT WE EXTRACT FROM ASTEROIDS. EARTH SHALL PROVIDE A GOOD TECHNOLOGICAL HARVEST.



EVERY PIECE OF DEBRIS IS COLLECTED AND USED TO BUILD OUR WORLD. WE CONSTANTLY FIGHT AGAINST EROSION FROM SOLAR STORMS AND METEOR SHOWERS.

WE ARE SHORT OF METAL AND EACH PIECE OF SPACE DEBRIS IS CAREFULLY REFINED TO EXTRACT EVERY TRACE OF METAL.



THE METAL FROM YOUR PLANET WILL
END OUR TIME OF SHORTAGE.

WHAT ABOUT THE BILLIONS
OF LIFE-FORMS ON EARTH?

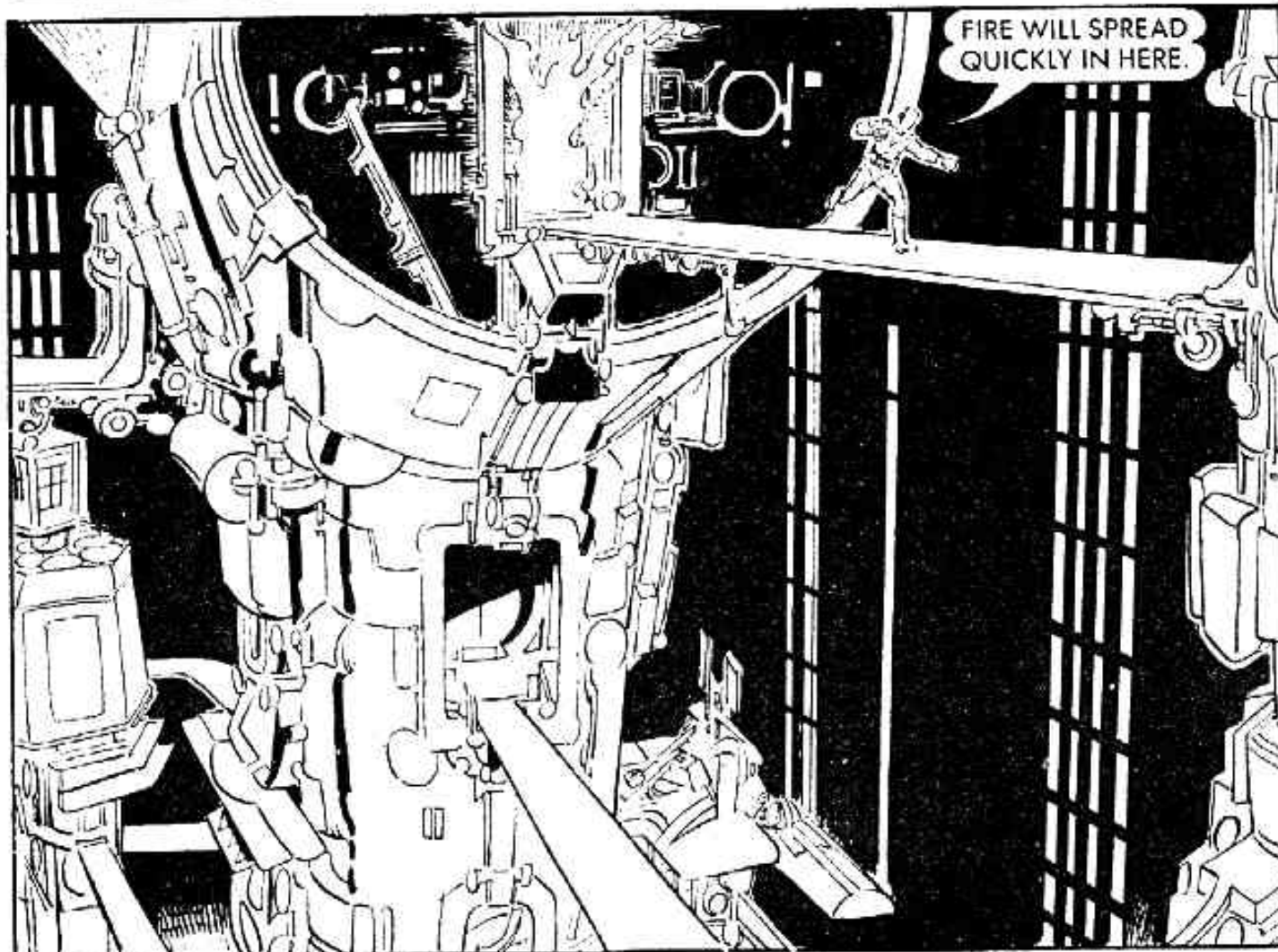


WITH LITTLE OR NO METAL AVAILABLE THE BUILDINGS OF PROX WERE MADE OF HIGHLY INFLAMMABLE MATERIALS —

ONE DO-IT-YOURSELF DOORWAY
FOR A QUICK GETAWAY!



FIRE WILL SPREAD
QUICKLY IN HERE.



BEFORE THE FIRE CONTROL SYSTEMS ACTIVATED, PANIC WAS THE ORDER OF THE DAY —

THAT ALIEN MUST BE KILLED! GUARD HIS SPACE SHIP! DO NOT LET HIM ESCAPE.



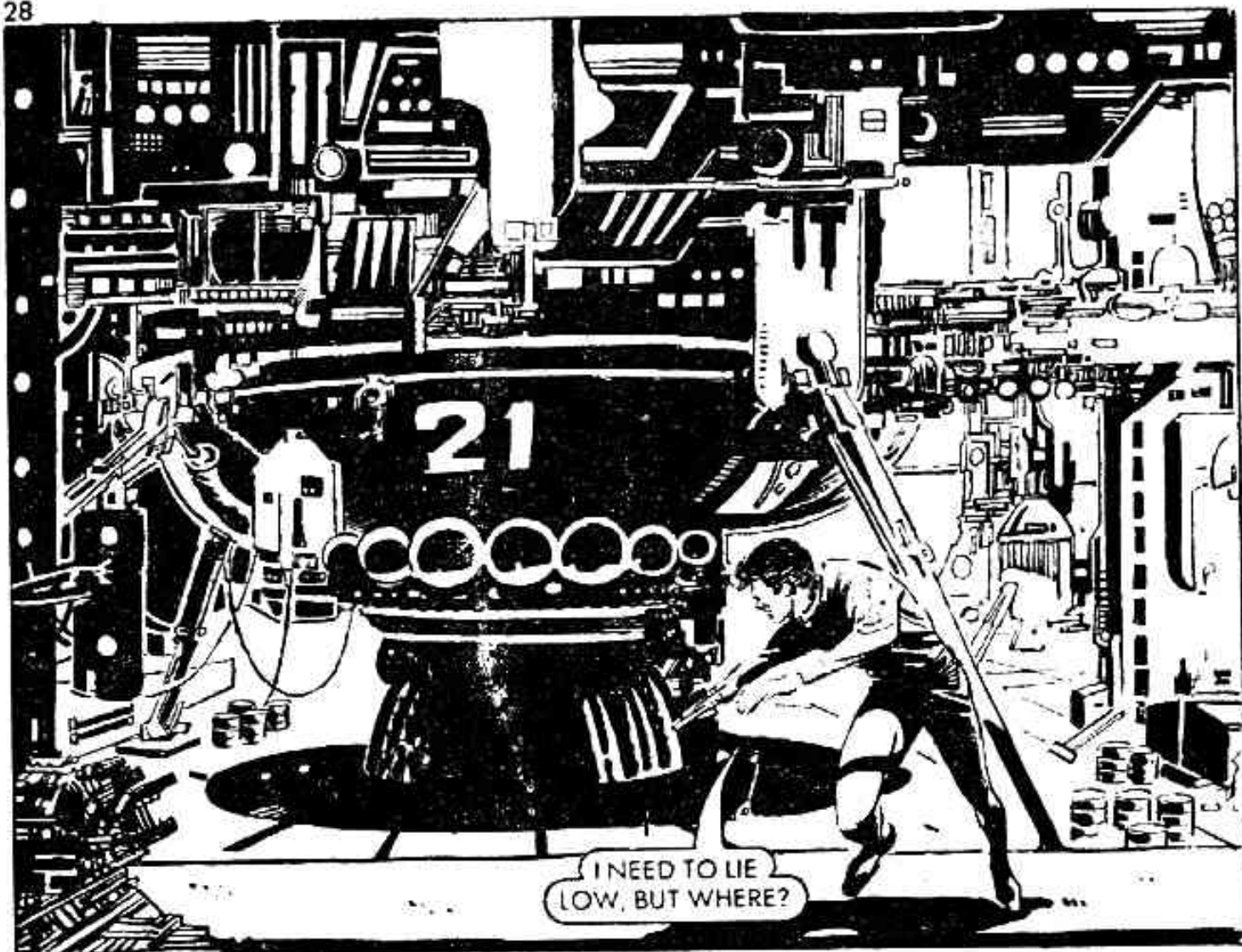
BUT HIS EXIT WAS CUT OFF

TOO LATE! NOW
WHERE DO I GO?



MY SHIP ISN'T TOO BADLY DAMAGED.
I MIGHT JUST COMPLETE THE GETAWAY.





A RECYCLING TIP ON THE FRINGE OF THE SPACE PORT WAS AN IDEAL PLACE TO HIDE.

THE TIP IS CHAOTIC
ENOUGH TO GIVE ME COVER.

I'M ABSOLUTELY LOST. LET'S
HOPE MY PURSUERS ARE TOO!



KELVIN WANDERED DEEP INTO THE TIP.



YOU'VE STRAYED
TOO FAR, SPY!

WHAT THE...?



KELVIN EXPLAINED EVERYTHING TO THE PROX —

... SO A SATELLITE WILL BE
DRAWN THROUGH THE
VORTEX?

YES!

HE LED KELVIN TO HIS HIDE-OUT AND EXPLAINED HE WAS OPERATING ILLEGALLY ON THE
SPOIL TIP, PROSPECTING FOR RARE METALS MISSED BY THE MACHINES —

MY NAME IS SWAD. NOW TELL ME
ABOUT YOUR METAL.



KELVIN ONCE AGAIN EXPLAINED —



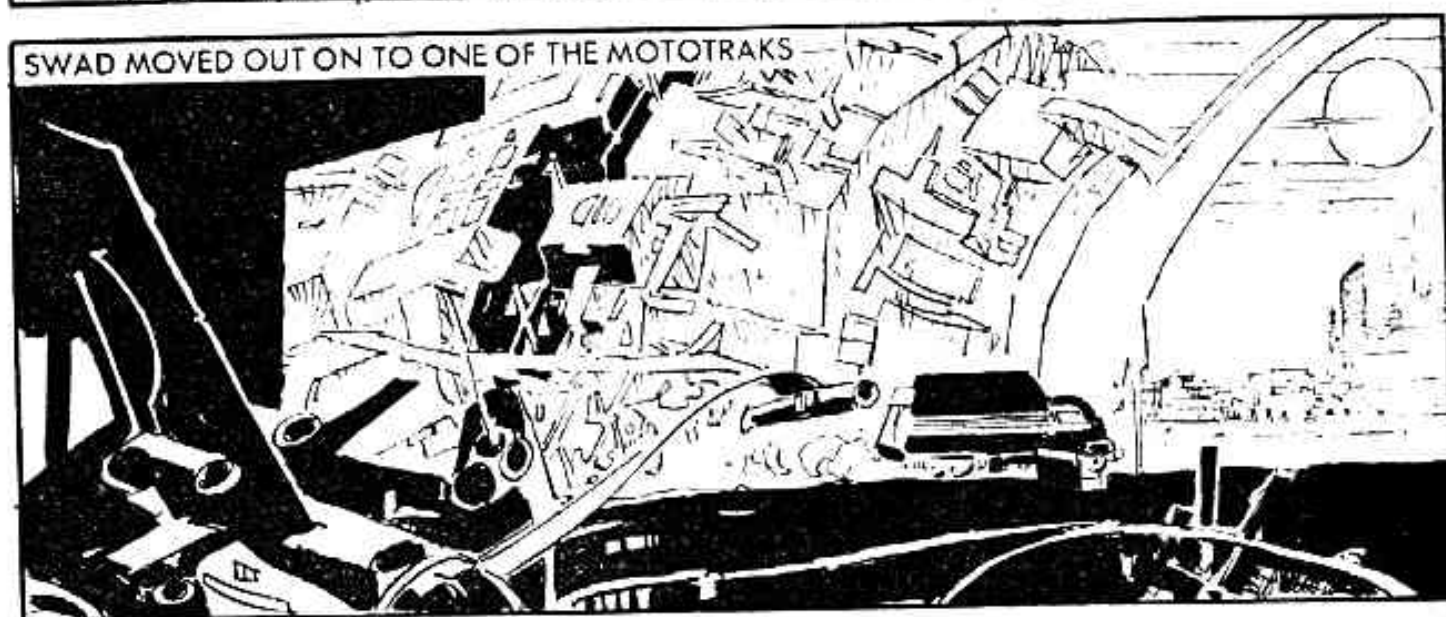
YOUR ELDER INTENDS TO DESTROY MY HOME PLANET SO THAT YOUR WORLD CAN EXTRACT ALL THE MINERALS.



YES, THE ELDER IS TRYING TO BUILD AN EMPIRE. I, AND MANY OTHERS ARE CONTENT AS THINGS ARE. STAY, I SHALL HELP.

SWAD DISAPPEARED FOR A SHORT TIME TO FETCH TRANSPORT —







SWAD'S TRUCK CAME TO A SUDDEN, SHUDDERING STOP.



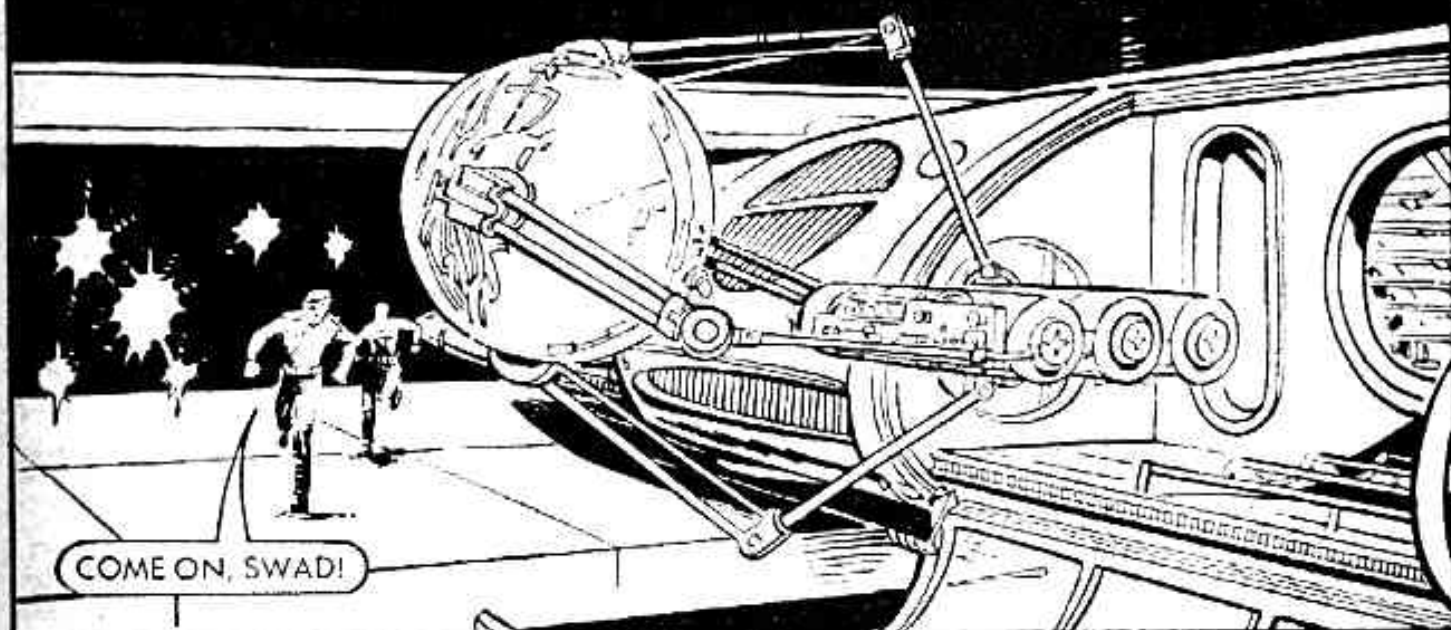
YOUR SHIP IS CLOSE
BUT SO ARE THE MILITIA!

THEY RAN TO THE SPACEPORT



IT IS THE ALIEN SCUM
SHOOT HIM.

BUT SWAD'S INTIMATE KNOWLEDGE OF THE SPACEPORT ENABLED THEM TO REACH KELVIN'S CRAFT —



KELVIN AND SWAD REACHED THE CRAFT UNSCATHED, AND TOOK OFF IMMEDIATELY.





STRAP YOURSELF IN SWAD.
IT COULD BE A ROUGH RIDE!



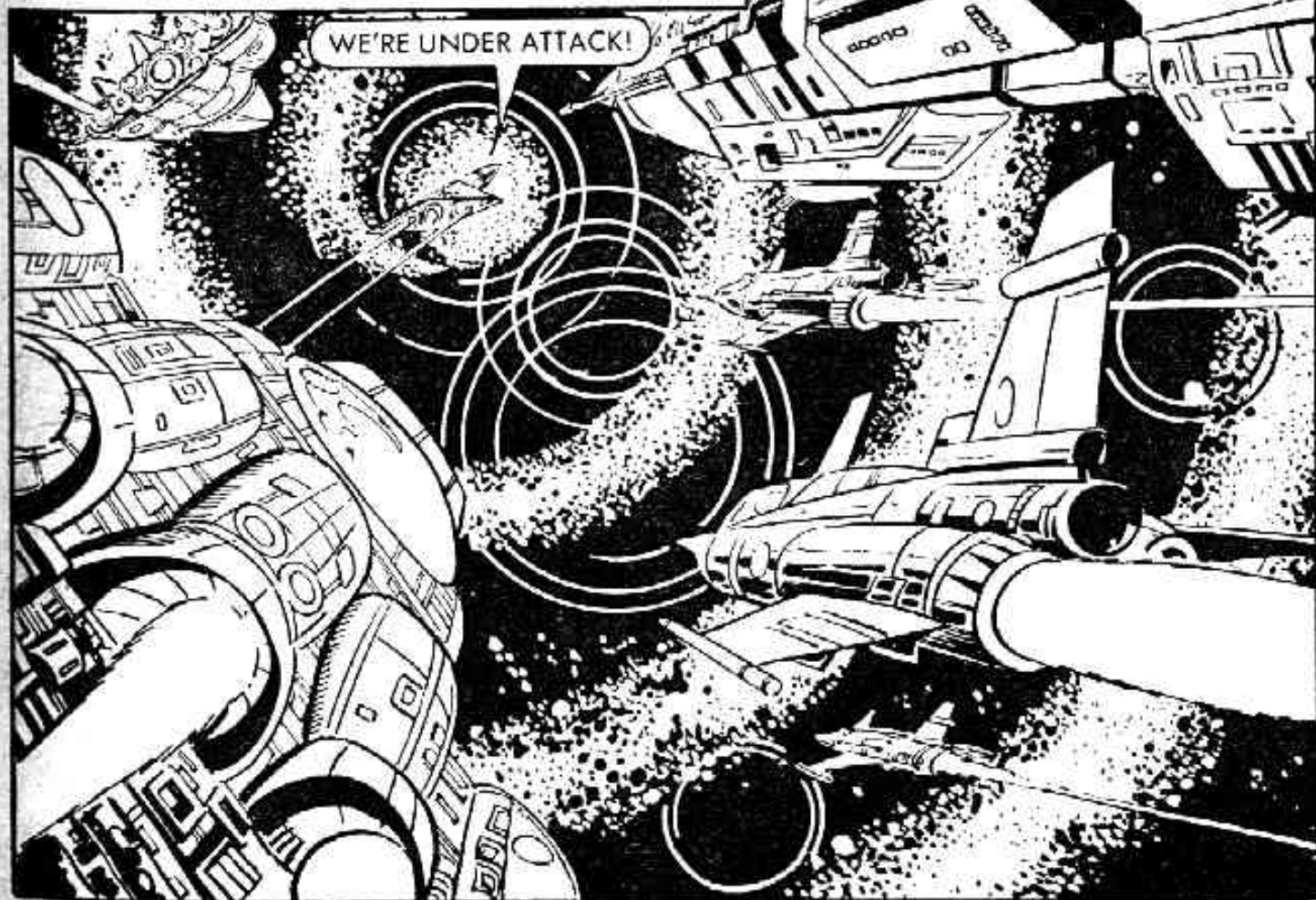
WHAT SORT OF WEAPON IS THAT?

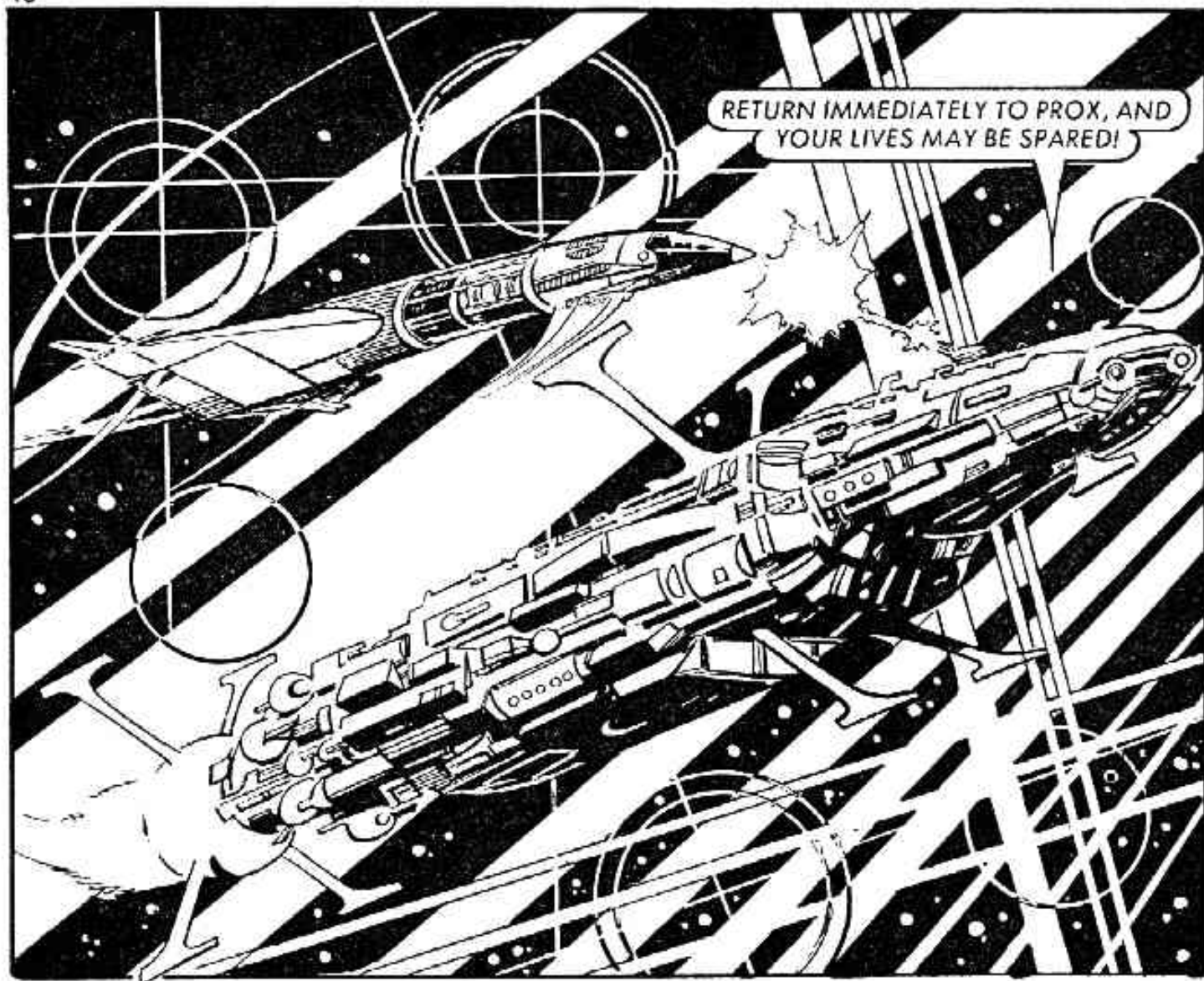
A NEUTRON PARTICLE ACCELERATOR!
THEY ARE CHANGING THE
DIRECTION OF THE VORTEX.

THE VORTEX WAS CAUSED BY A NEUTRON STAR COLLAPSING. BY FEEDING THE TRAPPED ENERGY WITH A CHARGED PARTICLE BEAM, THEY CAN MAKE IT CHANGE DIRECTION. THE RANGE OF THE METAL SENSOR IS SMALL, BUT NOW THEY ARE IN A MINERAL RICH GALAXY, THEY CAN CAPTURE EVERYTHING THEY SEE.



WE'RE UNDER ATTACK!









RETURN TO PROX BEFORE WE ARE TORN APART. WE CANNOT FOLLOW THE ALIEN.

WITH HIS EXPERIENCE OF THE OUTWARD FLIGHT, KELVIN WAS ABLE TO FIND A RELATIVELY SMOOTH ROUTE FOR THE RETURN THROUGH THE VORTEX.



THERE ARE SPIRAL CURRENTS OF FORCE RUNNING IN OPPOSITE DIRECTIONS WHICH MAKE TWO WAY JOURNEYS POSSIBLE. IF WE KEEP TO THE MAIN STREAM WE ARE SAFE FROM DAMAGE.



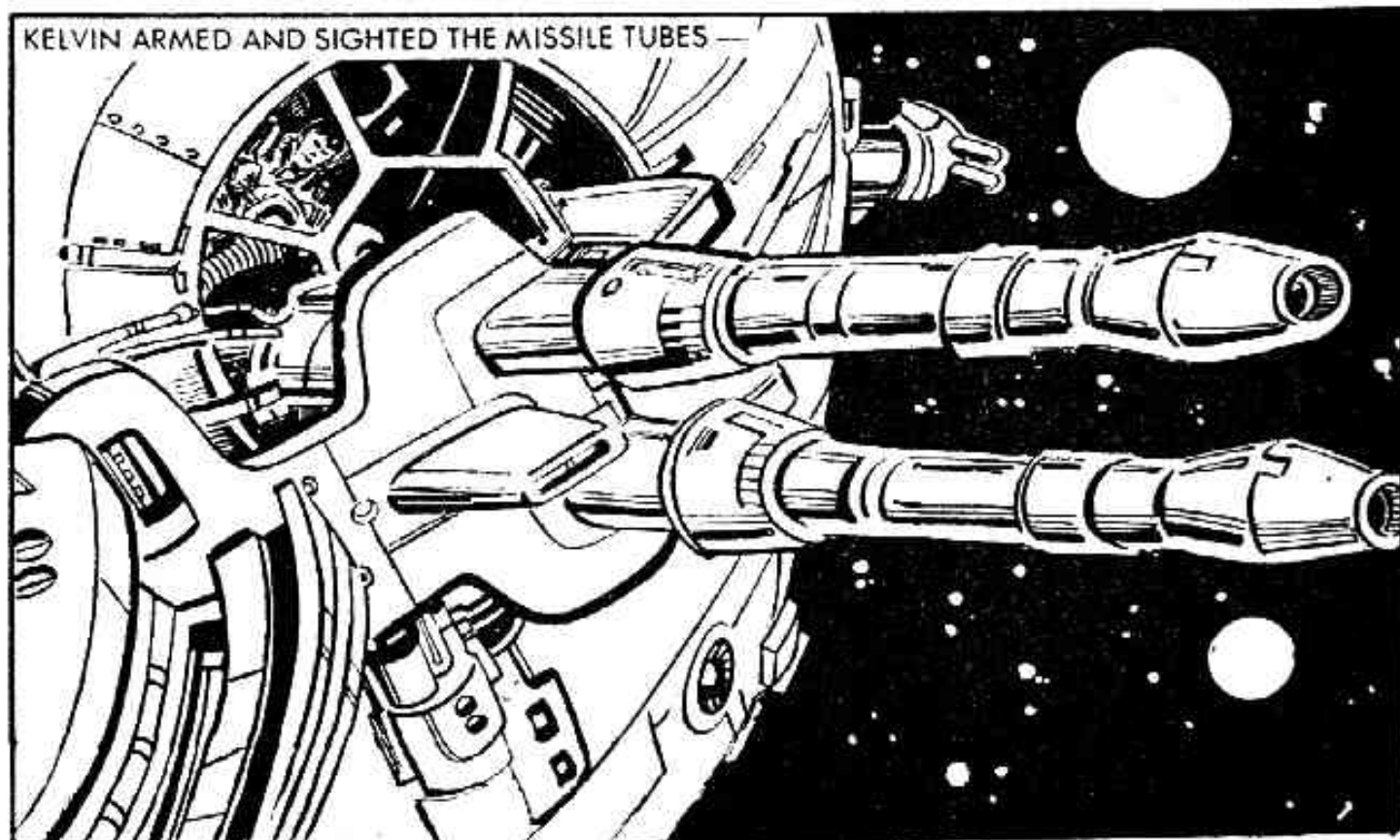
HERE WE ARE! THE OTHER
SIDE OF THE VORTEX.

JUST LOOK AT ALL
THAT METAL!

AS THEY BLASTED THROUGH INTO TERRAN SPACE, THE PROX SHIP THAT HAD MADE THE
FIRST JOURNEY THROUGH, OPENED FIRE.



THEY'RE WAITING FOR US! A
WARNING MUST HAVE BEEN SENT
AHEAD.



BUT THE HOMING GUIDANCE SYSTEM OF KELVIN'S MISSILES DID NOT REACT TO THE NON-METALLIC PROX SHIP.

THE HEAT SEEKING MISSILES ARE USELESS.





KELVIN AND SWAD GAVE UP. THEY WERE ESCORTED TO THE SPACE LAB —





KELVIN RECOUNTED ALL THAT HAD HAPPENED.





THE PRISONERS WERE UNDER CONSTANT SURVEILLANCE —

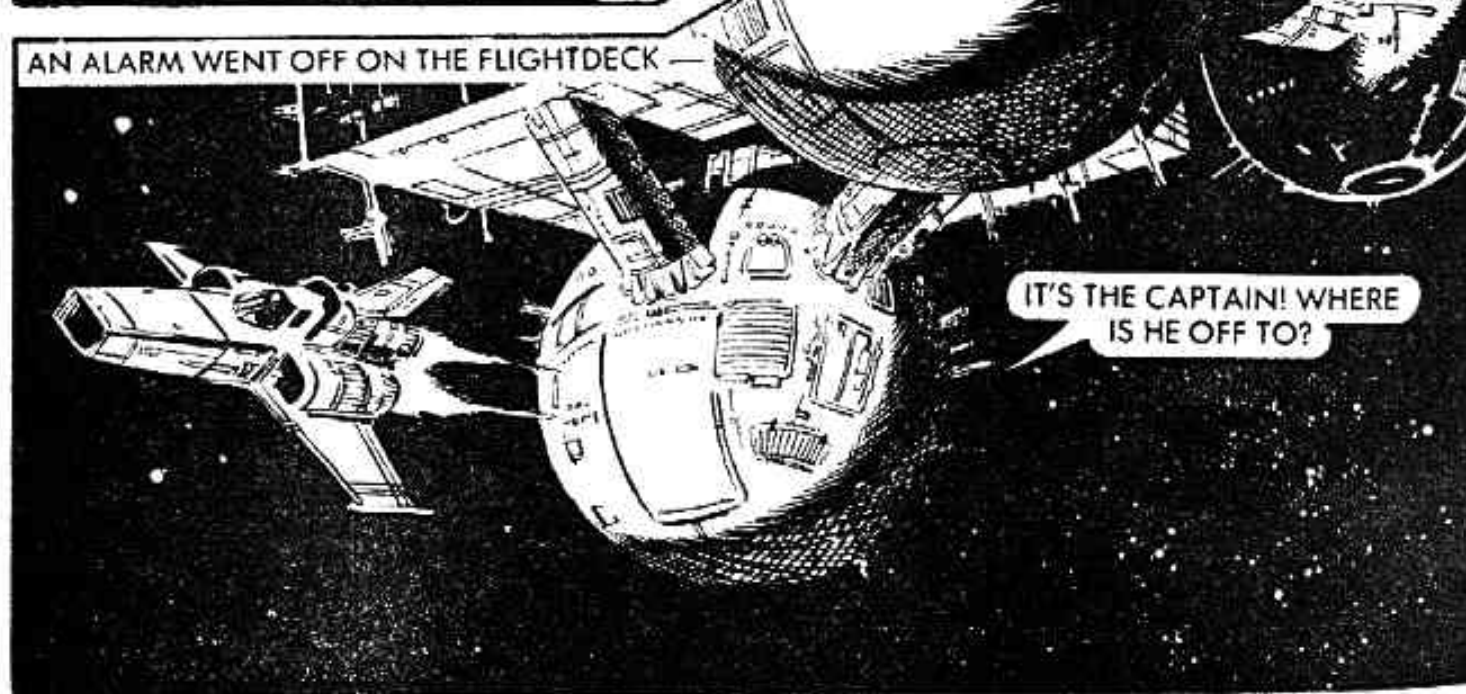








AN ALARM WENT OFF ON THE FLIGHTDECK —





THE CAPTAIN HAD A TRACTOR BEAM ON THE MISSILE —

SPACE LAB TO CAPTAIN!
HOLD THE ATTACK!
THERE COULD BE
DANGER WE DIDN'T
REALISE.


I TAKE THE DECISIONS.
THE MISSILE ATTACK GOES ON.



THE CAPTAIN SPACEWALKED DOWN TO THE MISSILE WHERE HE RESET IT FOR AUTODETONATE —

I'M GOING TO TOW THIS MISSILE
TO THE HEART OF THAT MONSTER VORTEX.





CAPTAIN TO SPACE LAB:
I'M ON TARGET, OVER AND OUT!

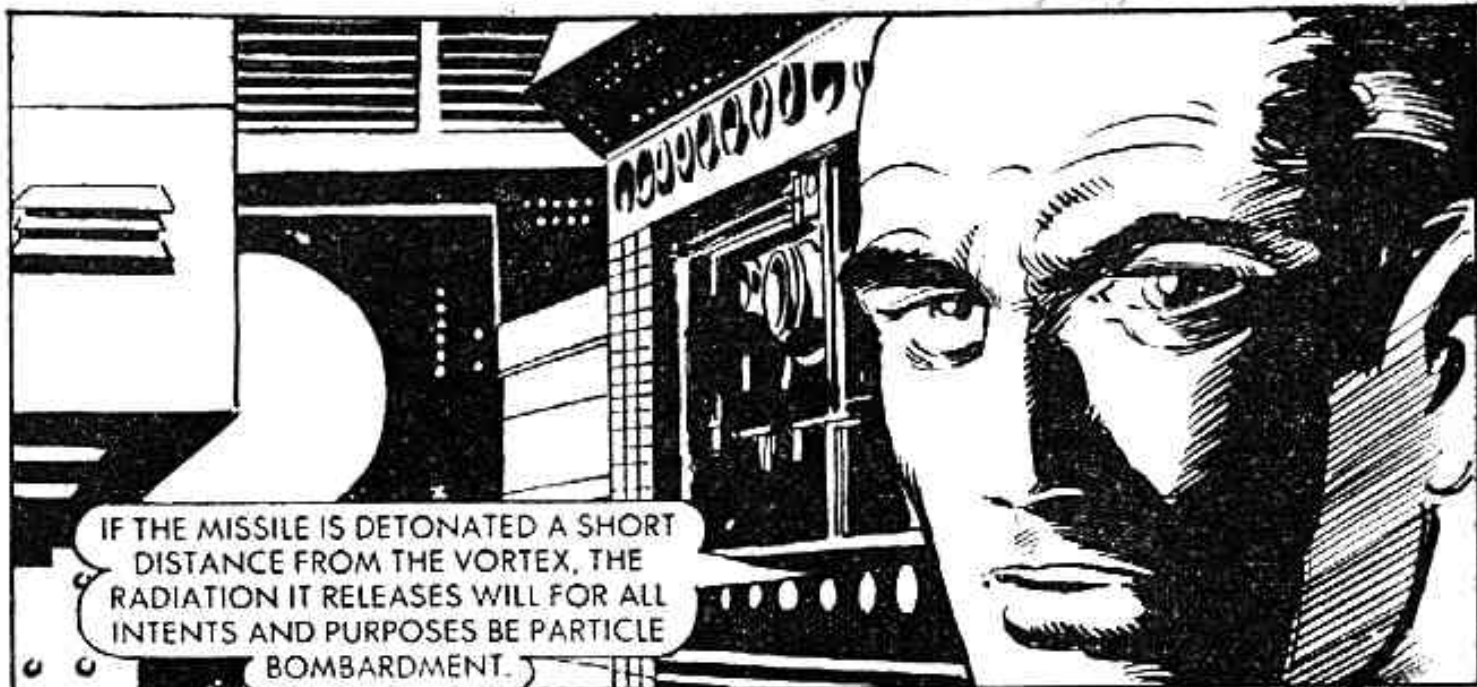
KELVIN CALLED THE ELDER ON THE PROX
COMMUNICATION LINK.



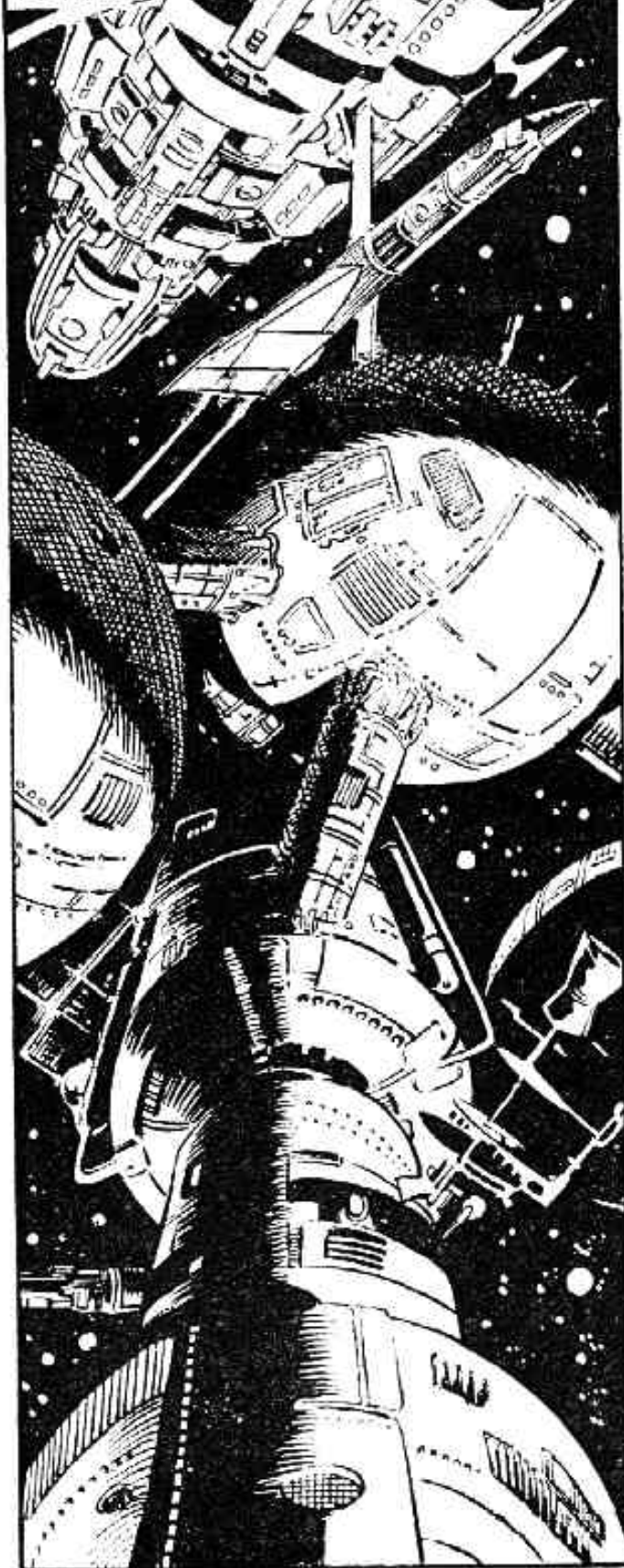
THERE IS A WARHEAD ABOUT TO
STRIKE THE HEART OF THE VORTEX.
TAKE COVER IF YOU CAN.

WE HAVE NO NEED OF
WARNING. WE ARE PREPARED!

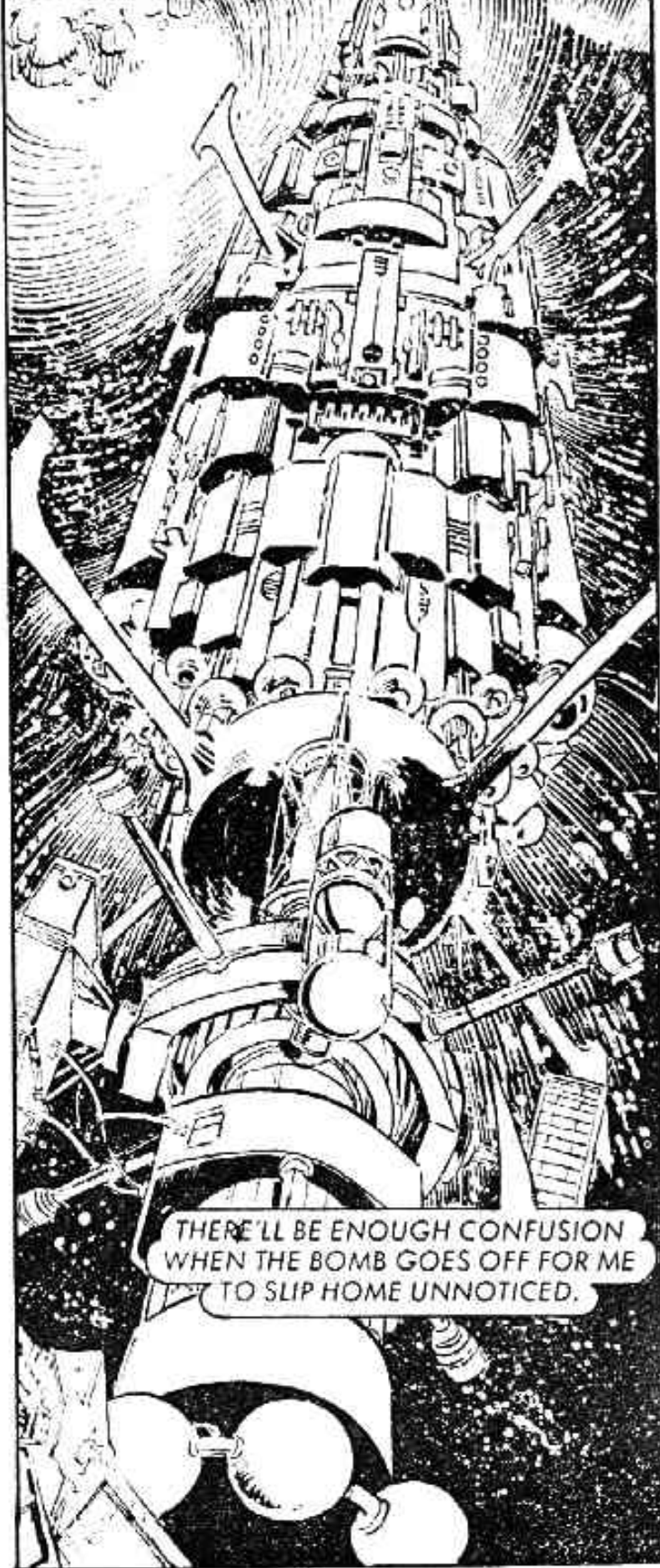




SWAD USED THE PROX SPACESHIP TO SLOW THE ORBITAL SPEED OF THE SPACE LAB. IT BEGAN TO BE DRAWN TOWARDS THE VORTEX.



SWAD NUDGED HIS PRIZE INTO THE SAFE PATH WITHIN THE VORTEX, AND HEADED FOR PROX.



THERE'LL BE ENOUGH CONFUSION WHEN THE BOMB GOES OFF FOR ME TO SLIP HOME UNNOTICED.

AS SWAD BRAVED THE VORTEX, KELVIN BEGAN HIS ATTEMPT TO STOP THE CAPTAIN FROM TAKING THE MISSILE TOO CLOSE TO THE UNSTABLE HEART OF THE VORTEX.

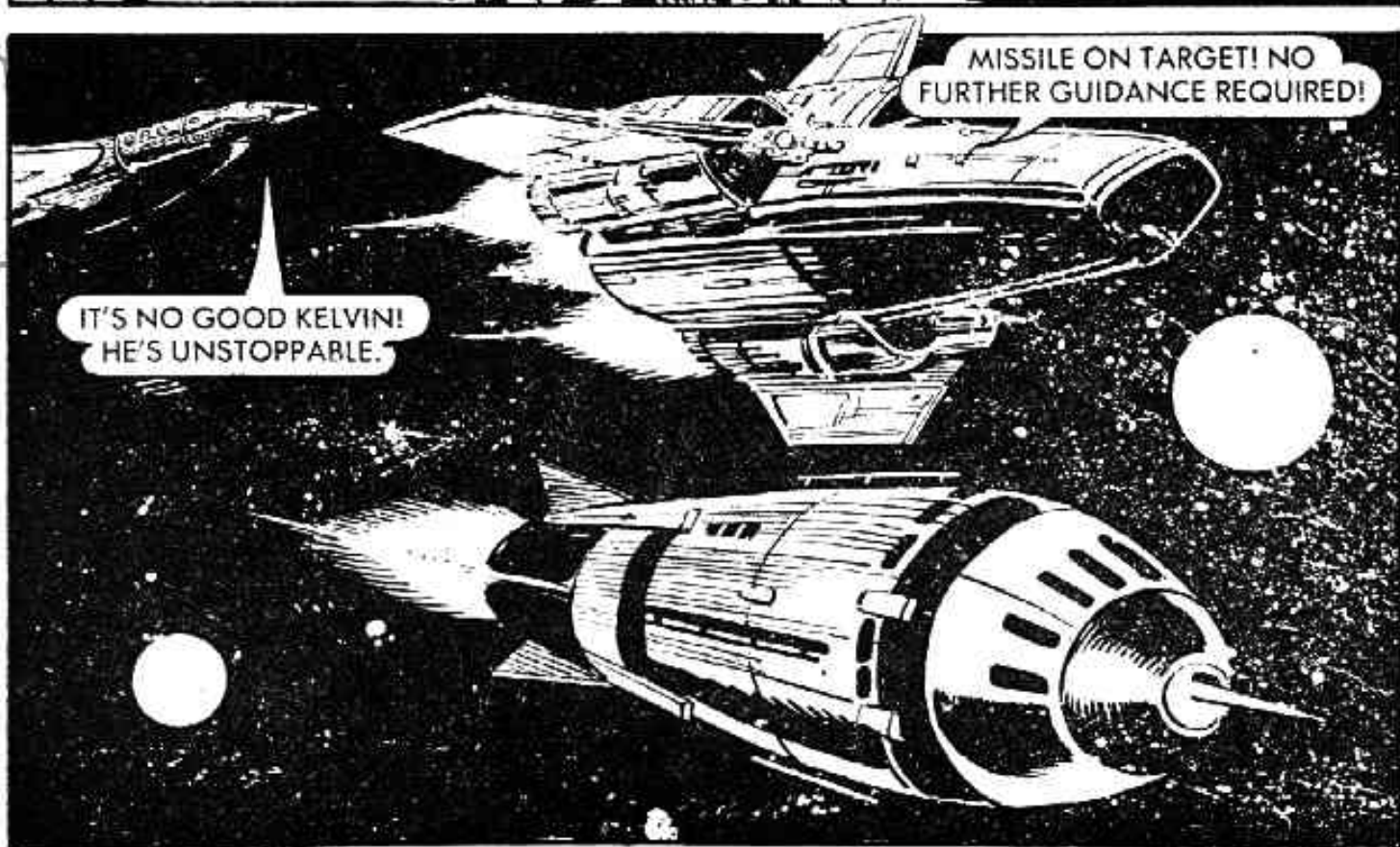
I CAN'T DETONATE THE MISSILE FROM A DISTANCE BECAUSE THE PROX MELTED MY CANNON.

PERHAPS I CAN PERSUADE HIM. I'LL TRY THE RADIO AGAIN.



MISSILE ON TARGET! NO FURTHER GUIDANCE REQUIRED!

IT'S NO GOOD KELVIN! HE'S UNSTOPPABLE.



AS THE CAPTAIN TURNED BACK —

THIS IS MUTINY! I'LL HAVE
YOU COURT-MARTIALLED, KELVIN!

WE'VE GOT TO STOP THAT MISSILE
WHETHER HE LISTENS OR NOT!

KELVIN MATCHED SPEEDS WITH THE MISSILE
AND FLOATED DOWN —

THERE IS A TIMING DEVICE ON THE
CASE OF THE MISSILE — IF I CAN
GET TO IT.

AS THE SECONDS TO DETONATION TICKED AWAY, KELVIN TRIED TO ADJUST THE MISSILE'S PRE-SET PROGRAMME.



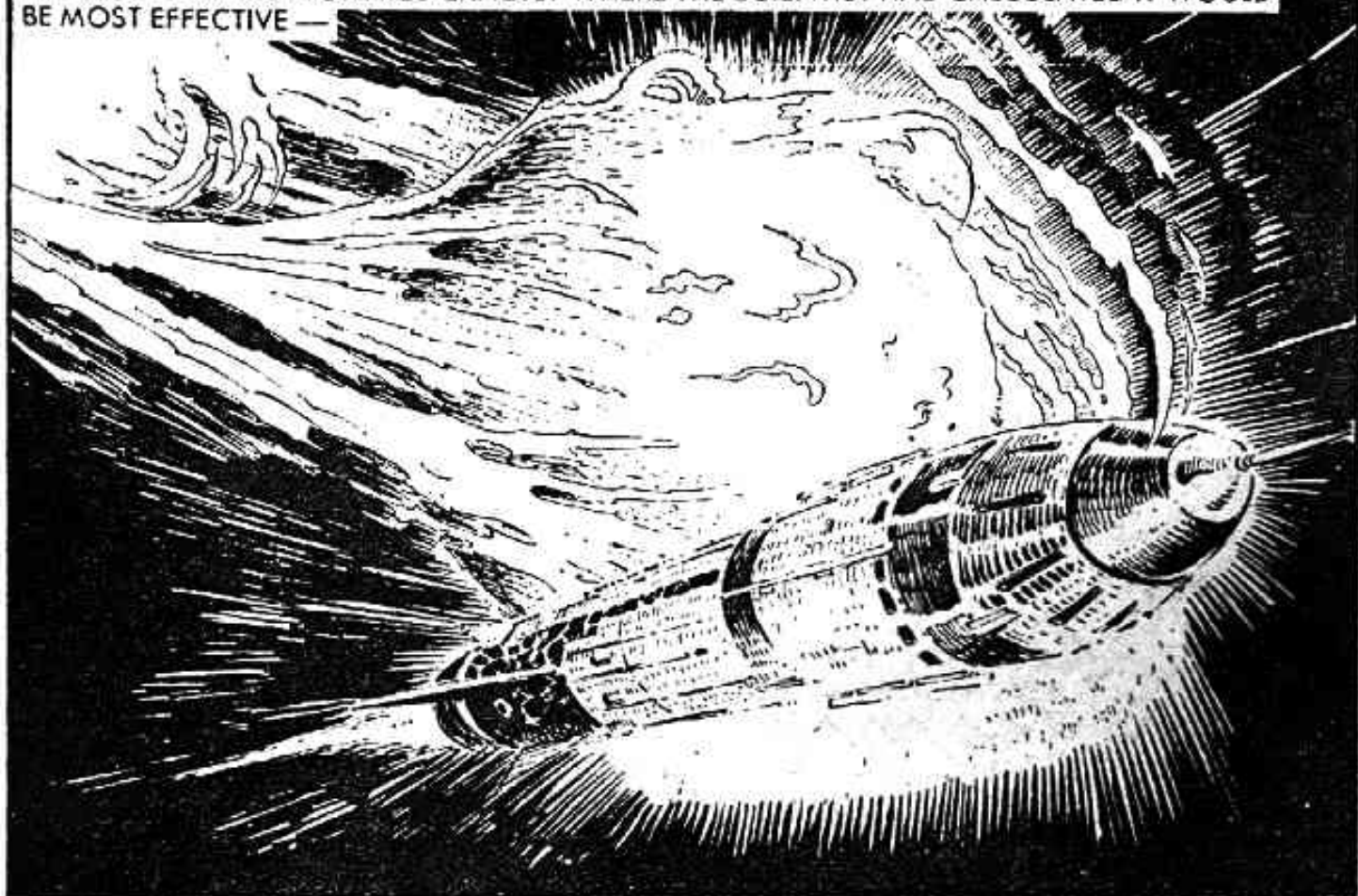
THE SHIPS FROM PROX MATERIALISED OUT OF THE VORTEX AND ATTACKED.



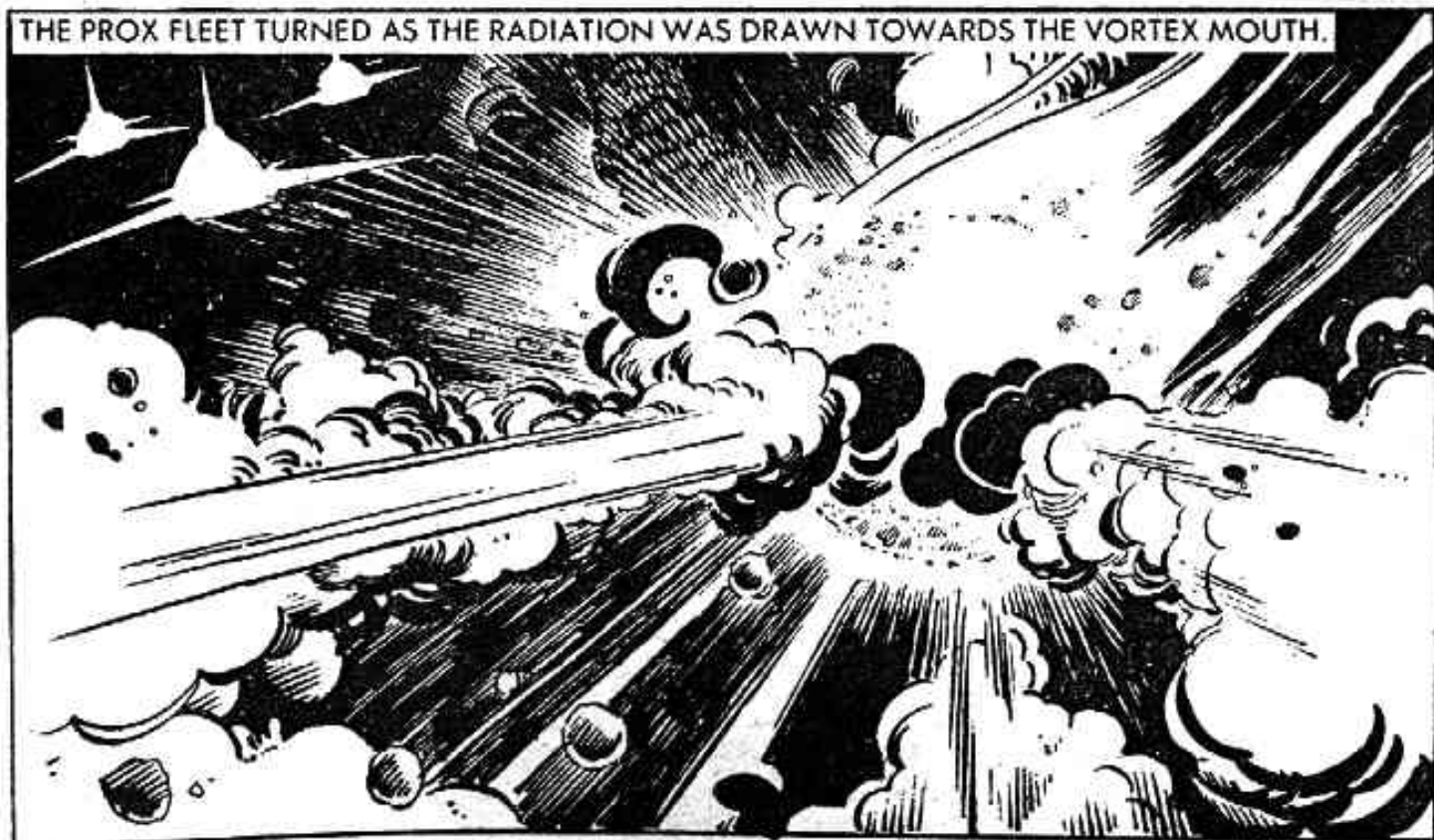
THERE'S ONLY ONE CHANCE
NOW ... IF THOSE PROX
PLASMA BLASTERS COULD HIT
THE MISSILE ...

A PROX FIGHTER RESPONDED
TO KELVIN'S PUNY DEFENCE.

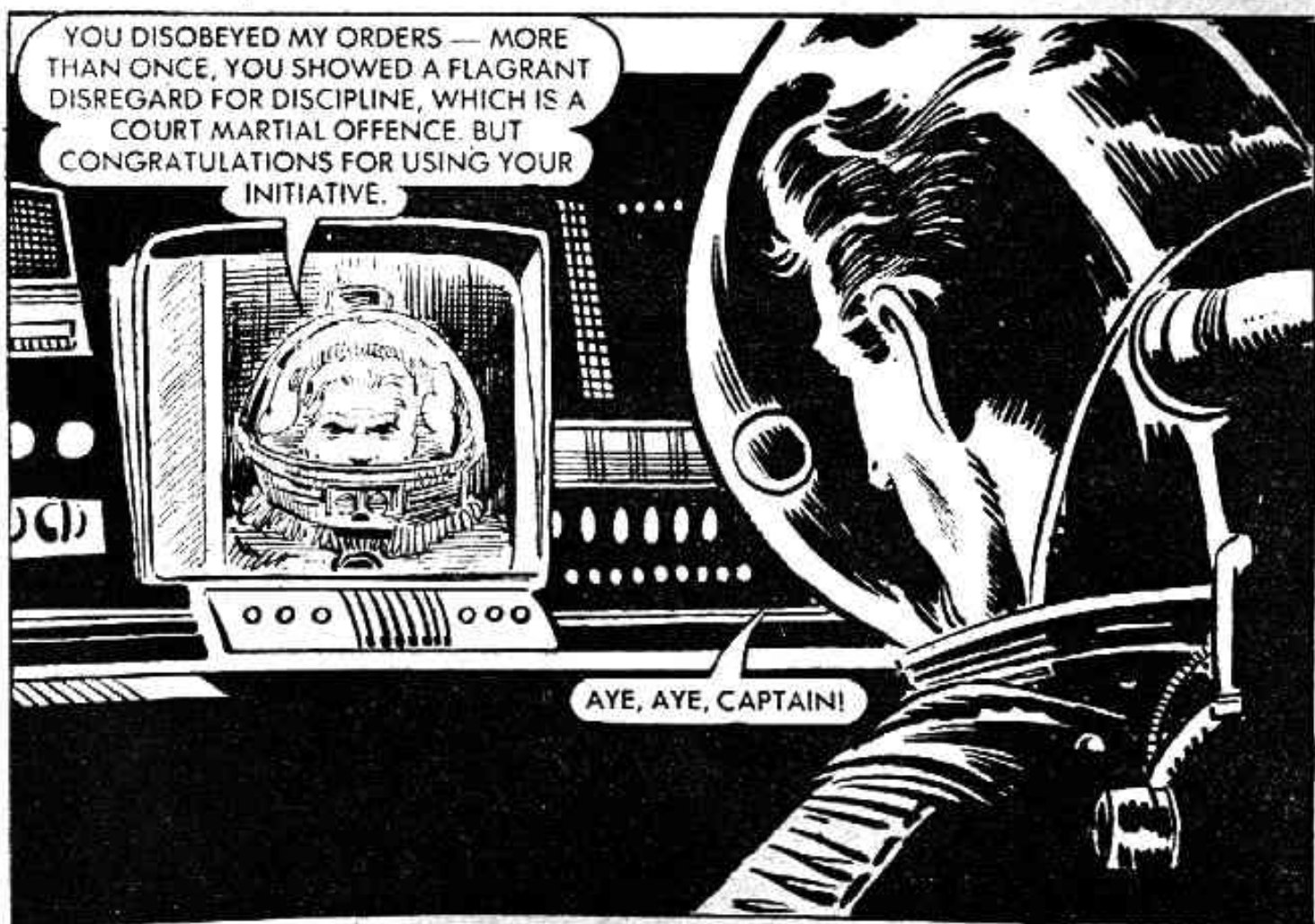
THE MISSILE WAS DETONATED EXACTLY WHERE THE SCIENTIST HAD CALCULATED IT WOULD BE MOST EFFECTIVE —



THE PROX FLEET TURNED AS THE RADIATION WAS DRAWN TOWARDS THE VORTEX MOUTH.







THE THREE MEN RETURNED TOWARDS A HOME PLANET NOW SAFELY OUT OF REACH OF ATTACK FROM THE PLANET EATER.



EARTH HAD BEEN REPRIEVED FROM DESTRUCTION, NOT BY A WAR-MONGERING ENEMY, BUT BY ANOTHER NATION THAT SOUGHT TO SATISFY ITS OWN NEEDS WITHOUT PAYING THE SLIGHTEST ATTENTION TO THE PLEAS OF THE PEOPLE WHO LIVED THERE.



OTHER

STARBLAZER

SPACE FICTION ADVENTURE IN PICTURES No. 122

ALIEN INVASION

ON SALE AT YOUR NEWSAGENT'S



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Locked in a desperate race to achieve the first moon landing, Russia sent Colonel Georgi Timofeyevich Beregovoi, 47, into space. The lone pilot of Soyuz 3, launched on October 26, 1968, stayed up for 3 days, 22 hours, 51 mins. He is now a leader in the Soviet manned space programme.